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ABSTRACT

The goals of this program were to employ math, science, and occupational education teachers in positions that would expose them to advances in science and technology, thus increasing their effectiveness as teachers, and to provide businesses with competent part-time employees. Eighty-two teachers were employed and 30 businesses were served by the program, which was funded by New York State and located in New York City. A survey questionnaire sent to both participating teachers and businesses sought to determine the success of the program. Responses from all of the participants were positive. The majority of teachers thought their placements effectively used their skills and helped them to develop new skills, and found their exposure to experience in the private sector rewarding. Responding businesses rated teacher performance highly. Almost all respondents thought that the employment experience would enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom, and all respondents said that they would participate in the program again. (JD)

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TEACHER SUMMER
BUSINESS TRAINING
AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM
1984-85

OEA Evaluation Report

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EVALUATION SECTION

Robert Tobias, Administrator
John Schoener, Senior Manager

FINAL REPORT

JANUARY 1986

TEACHER SUMMER BUSINESS TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM 1984-85

Marvin S. Barondes
Director
Office of Funded Programs

Gina Detmar
Project Director

Prepared by the
Instructional Support Evaluation Unit
Frank Guerrero, Unit Manager
Sharon Walker, Evaluation Specialist
Jessica Marta, Evaluation Consultant

New York City Public Schools
Office of Educational Assessment
Richard Guttenberg, Director

SUMMARY

The primary goals of the 1984-85 Teacher Summer Business Training and Employment Program were to employ math, science, and occupational education teachers in positions that would expose them to advances in science and techonology thus increasing their effectiveness as classroom teachers, and to provide businesses with competent part time employees. Eighty-two teachers were employed and 30 businesses were served by the program. Funding for this program came from a $1.6 million grant from the New York State Legislature and $61,200 from the New York State Education Department.

To investigate the degree of satisfaction with the program and determine the benefits of the program for both participating teachers and businesses, the Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) developed a post-employment survey distributed to both participating teachers and participating businesses. A survey questionniare was also distributed to those teachers who applied to the program but did not participate in order to determine the reasons for non-participation.

Responses from both participating teachers and participating businesses were positive. The majority of teachers thought their placements effectively utilized their skills and helped them to develop new skills. Teachers also believed that their exposure to and experience in the private sector provided them with relevant information to impart to their students as well as give them an awareness of the methods and procedures of the private sector.

Responding businesses rated teacher performance highly and reported that teachers they hired possessed excellent to adequate skills. Almost all the respondents thought that the employment experience would enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom, and all the respondents said that they would participate in the program again.

The Non-Participating Teachers Survey indicated that over half of the teachers that applied to the program were never offered a position. Thirteen percent expected the program to take full responsibility for placing them.

The major recommendation is to provide applicants with information which will enable then to make their own employment arrangements.

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I. PROJECT OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Teacher Summer Business Training and Employment program was designed to temporarily employ eligible area teachers in positions that would expose them to the rapid changes occurring in science and technology.

The program was funded with a $1.6 million grant from the New York State Legislature and a $61 thousand grant from the New York State Education Department for the period September 1, 1984 to June 30, 1985. The program was open to all junior and senior high school teachers in the fields of computer science, mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, earth science, occupational education, and elementary teachers in the areas of math or science.

Through the program, business employing teachers between July 1, and August 31, 1985, could receive state reimbursement for 30 percent of employee wages and associated fringe benefits, to a maximum of $1,000 per teacher. Each teacher had to work at least two weeks or 80 hours during the period. Teachers applied for posisions which would match their background. Private sector and not-for-profit employers qualified by offering position in applicable subject areas. For example, industrial arts teachers were employed as electrical technicians, graphic artists, and cabinet makers, whereas business education teachers worked as clerks, word processors, and personnel assistants.

POPULATION SERVED

According to the program director, 1,216 teachers applied and 82 teachers participated. The program was advertised through various

sources such as, the United Federation of Teachers Newspaper (The New York Teacher) and program circulars from the New York City Board of Education and the State Education Department.

Businesses were enlisted through a brochure disseminated by the New York City Chamber of Commerce, the New York City Partnership, the Mayor's Office for Economic Development and other business organizations. Thirty businesses participated in the program.

The program attempted to match subject area teachers with appropriate businesses, but the responsibility for hiring and placing teachers fell primarily on the businesses themselves. Since there were so many applicants, prospective participants were selected by lottery. From there, businesses interviewed teachers and, if appropriate, placed them. According to the program director, 482 teachers were interviewed. Eighty two teachers were selected and placed in business settings. Teachers could also find their own arrangements: for example, a teacher of auto mechanics could work in a garage for the summer. As long as placement was in non-teaching position, both the teacher and the business were eligible to participate in the program.

PROGRAM GOALS

The goals of the Teacher Summer Training Program were to keep teachers up-to-date on current industrial and scientific information and to provide businesses with competent part time employees. To accomplish these goals, the program was to carry out the following activities:

- to publicize the program;
- to identify possible business and industry jobs for teachers;

°to match teachers with jobs; and

°to improve the effectiveness of the program in this region.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The evaluation of the Teacher Summer Business and Employment program conducted by the Office of Educational Assessment (O.E.A.) consisted of the following components: post-employment surveys distributed to both participating teachers and participating businesses, a survey questionnaire distributed to those teachers who applied but did not participate, and interviews with the program director.

Both the participating teachers and businesses surveys were designed to investigate the degree of satisfaction with the program and the benefits of the program for teacheers and businesses. The non-participating teachers survey inquired about reasons for non-participation.

II. FINDINGS

POST-EMPLOYMENT TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

A post-employment questionnaire, developed by the Office of Educational Assessment, was distributed to a random sample of 50 teachers who participated in the program. Sixty percent of these teachers responded. Two fifths of the respondents were either science or computer science teachers, 37 percent were math teachers, 13 percent were business education or secretarial science teachers, and the remaining 10 percent were industrial arts, or elementary school teachers. Teachers of varying experience participated in the program. The mean number of years teaching was 16.2 years.

Respondents rated the degree to which their summer placements drew on existing skills; helped to develop new skills; were relevant to their classroom situation; and enhanced their effectiveness in the classroom. Participants were asked to rate these items on a scale of one to four, corresponding to ratings of "very much," "moderately," "minimally," and "not at all."

Participants' responses were generally positive. Seventy-seven percent of the participants thought their placements drew "very much on their existing skills" and half of the participants thought their placements helped "very much" to develop new skills. Teachers were asked to list the new skills they had learned. Participants most often cited exposure to and development of new technical skills.

Three teachers who worked as office workers used the WANG word processor and the IBM PC for the first time. Other teachers who had

worked with computers were able to advance their knowledge by learning new computer program such as Data Base III, VISICALC, Multi-Mate, Lotus 1-2-3, and HSE. One business teacher said he learned to use the computer for practical business applications.

Of teachers surveyed, 20 percent tought the experience helped to develo both their written and verbal comunication skills. For example, one teacher mentioned "communicating effectively in groups" to sharpen their writing skills, specifically writing succinctly and summarizing. Three teachers were hired by an educational software company to help write software manuals, while another worked as a public relations assistant.

Classroom Relevance and Teacher Enhancement

Generally, teachers felt that their exposure to and experience in the private sector provided them with first hand and specific information to impart to students. Teachers reported feeling confident that the materials they would be presenting was relevant to students' lives. One fifth of the teachers reported an increased awareness of the specific technical skills needed in the job market. Seventeen percent of the teachers also stressed the importance of teaching basic skills as a foundation for successful employment.

Teachers gave specific examples of relevant information they would pass on to students. This included information on entry level requirements, up to date information on salary and hours, directions for writing a good resume, and procedures for developing a career strategy.

The experience helped some teachers to develop professionally, and thus become more effective in the classroom. For example, one teacher whose summer position required him to do a lot of writing said he gained a deeper understanding of the writing process. Another teacher who helped to develop educational software said he learned more about computers and their utilization for different subjects, problems, and populations. A science teacher who worked for the Parks Council reported learning a great deal about the plants and wildlife of New York City parks.

Teachers were asked to list the greatest benefits of the program. Thirteen teachers mentioned increased awareness of methods and proceedures of the private sector; three teachers mentioned exchanging ideas with professionals in other fields; four teachers cited their ability to relate subject matter of the classroom to the demands of the private sector; five teachers cited the chance to learn and improve skills; and eight teachers specified increased teacher morale.

POST-EMPLOYMENT BUSINESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Post-employment questionnaires were sent to a random sample of 25 participating businesses. Twelve businesses returned the questionnaire after they were completed by personnel officers, supervisors, or owners of businesses. Respondents were asked to evaluate the participating teachers' performance as "excellent," "adequate," "slightly inadequate," or "very inadequate." Respondents were also asked to rate their overall satisfaction with the program and to state whether they planned to participate in the program next year. In addition, respondents were

also questioned about their reasons for participating in the program and asked to make suggestion for program improvement.

Generally, respondents had praise for both the program and the caliber of teachers sent to them by the program. All respondents reported that the employed techers had excellent (50 percent) or adequate (50 percent) skills and/or knowledge to do the job. All businesses were very (66 percent) or moderately (33 percent) satisfied with teacher performance on the job.

Businesses had different reasons for participating in the program. Three of the responding businesses believed the program goals were worthwhile and saw the program as a way to improve the school system. Another three businesses thought that teachers would prove to be motivated and productive employees.

All of the respondents said that they would participate in the program next year: 58 percent would like to participate at the same level and 42 percent at an expanded level. Almost all the employers (83 percent) thought that the employment experience would enhance teacher effectiveness in the classroom.

Businesses were also asked how the program could better meet the goals of improving teachers' performance in the classroom. One respondent suggested that teachers' employment experience be specifically structured so that they receive maximum exposure to areas that are transferable to the classroom in business, math, and science. Another responded that "companies should have a more planned workload; outline of what the employee should learn." Other respondents thought that teachers should be more involved in defining program goals at the

outset. Finally, businesses asked to be notified as early as possible of the availability and skills of teacher applicants so that they could create and fill positions for them.

NON-PARTICIPATING TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

A questionnaire was mailed to a random sample of 50 teachers who registered but did not participate in the program. Twenty three teachers returned the completed questionnaire. The majority of respondents were business education high school teachers (82 percent).

Teachers reported two reasons for not participating in the program: 48 percent were never offered a position and 17 percent could not find a position, and received no help in securing a position. Thirteen percent expected the program to take full responsibility for placing them. Only two non-participating teachers reported having been interviewed for a position. Respondents most frequently stated that they had wanted to participate in the program to upgrade their skills. Seventy-eight percent of the respondents stated that they would like to particpate in the program in the future.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Teacher Summer Business Training and Employment Program provided summer employment opportunities to 82 teachers. Thirty businesses participated in the program. It was well received by both participating teachers and participating businesses.

The program had a positive impact on the participating techers and businesses in that:

- °Most teachers benefitted from the program either through learning new skills or learning more about the private sector.
- °Most businesses were very satisfied with the caliber and productivity of the applicants and almost all businesses said they would like to participate either in the same or in an expanded capacity in the future.

The following recommendation is offered for further enhancement of the program:

- °Provide applicants with information which will enable them to make their own employment arrangements.